

27 December 1978

STAT MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]  
Chairman, DDA Federal Women's Program  
Working Group

STAT FROM : [REDACTED]  
DDA Representative to Federal Women's  
Program Board

SUBJECT : Comments re Memorandum on DDA Special  
Career Tracking Program and Report  
on Sex Discrimination in the DDA (U)

1. I have read with interest the memorandum on the DDA Special Career Tracking Program and your report on sex discrimination in the DDA. May I make the following comments for your consideration. I would like to discuss these further with you at some mutually convenient time.

a. Do you have a list of the technical job categories?

b. How many men were identified for the 1980 PDP projection?

c. Do you have a feel for whether the men who attain higher level positions have all received the training that is referred to on page 4 as being desirable for women who aspire to those same positions?

d. What can we do for those women who have had the necessary training and experience, but are still waiting for the assignments?

e. While some women "view their positions as really jobs rather than stepping stones in their career path", women at the GS-12 and up levels probably view theirs differently.

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f. Has anyone reviewed the career paths of women who made lateral entry into the Agency at the GS-11 and up levels during the past five years to see what has happened to them? Are they still with the Agency? Have they advanced? If not, why not? (U)

2. In reviewing the projected agenda for the Spring Seminar, the thought comes to mind that the program will have particular appeal to individuals who are at the beginning of their careers. It may be of limited interest to those individuals who have already worked in the Agency for a number of years, who have already proven themselves, who have already done the many things one must do to qualify for consideration, but who are awaiting recognition and the opportunity to advance. I am thinking particularly of the many women at the GS-09 thru -12 levels who already have the "tickets", and from whose ranks should come the 13's, 14's, and 15's that are so desperately needed. (U)

3. Perhaps we could expand the agenda to include a discussion on the impact of the new personnel policies such as wider distribution of vacancy notices, more uniform personnel procedures, new promotion panel system, the N.A.P.A. group, overseas employment for married employees, etc., and develop a more comprehensive program to draw a wider audience. (U)

4. I will be on leave the week of 2 January 1979. Let's get together after that. (U)



STAT

**T**HERE WERE FOUR women on the panel, three of them still married to foreign service officers, one of them divorced from a former ambassador, and they appeared Wednesday before a congressional subcommittee to say that spouses of American foreign service officers don't want to play by the old rules any more.

"While life in the foreign service is stimulating and has undeniable rewards of personal growth, travel and international friendship, the dark side is seldom recognized," testified Lesley Dorman, president of the Association of American Foreign Service Women. "We experience the alienation of culture shock, the isolation of language inadequacy, the hazards of rigorous climate and endemic disease, the trials of evacuations and the pervasive fear of terrorism."

And in recent years, she and others testified, the foreign service spouses have been experiencing an even more threatening phenomenon: the changing American life style, with its high divorce rate, which has left hundreds of thousands of middle-aged women in economic and emotional

JUDY MANN

## *Foreign Service Wives: What Price 'Service'?*

chaos. The foreign service wife who has spent most of her career years overseas at her husband's side, unable to earn money independently, is in a particularly tough economic situation, according to Dorman.

"For these women, divorce exacts a heavy toll. Our association is deeply concerned about the hardships of the many divorced foreign service wives who are left after long years of unpaid government service abroad with no employment record, no modern skills, no social security, no shared annuity, no survivor benefits, and exorbitantly expensive medical insurance."

The panel endorsed a bill sponsored by Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.), that would allow a di-

vorced spouse to share in her husband's government annuity at a rate based on the number of years they were married and he was in the foreign service.

It also recommended changes in current laws and regulations that would enable spouses of foreign service officers to improve their economic situation while overseas by helping them get good jobs with the government and allowing them to earn credit toward Civil Service status and retirement for work done in overseas posts.

And the panel urged the State Department to look for new ways to compensate the "highly involved diplomatic spouse who devotes untold volunteer hours to the work of U.S. missions and community projects abroad, and without whose contributions of time and talent the quality of our presence abroad would be vastly diminished."

"Foreign service wives frequently perform hours of unpaid service for the government," testified Patricia Ryan. "Our time-use survey shows that wives of middle and upper rank officers do-

See MANN, C9, Col. 4

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## Foreign Service Wives: What Price 'Service'?

MANN, From C1

nate from one to four weeks work per month. . . . There is no present method for reimbursing wives for their work, because there is no satisfactory means of rating the work."

"It's a very tricky thing politically," said Ryan later. "A solution might well be in some sort of stipend for the wife, herself, in her name which would carry with it some pensionable element. . . . Then you get into the problem of how do you grade it? Her mushrooms aren't good, but her chicken salad is marvelous? It's mind-boggling."

And, said Ryan, some service wives resent that approach. As one wife put it: "They're getting me because I love my husband and I like to support him. To pay me \$3 an hour for pushing canapes around puts me in the category of a cocktail waitress. . . ."

Ryan and others said the American government exploits foreign service wives, and they have a point. For years, until 1972, the foreign service wife was expected to help her husband in his diplomatic work by entertaining at their home and doing no end of charitable work in the host country. The wife and family were seen as such an important part of the husband's work performance that they were rated on his efficiency report.

"Before a senior wife might call up and say we've decided to have a bazaar and the Americans are all going to bake 13 cakes," said Ryan. "Well, you just didn't say shove it out your ear."

That stopped in 1972 when the State Department issued an order terminating the efficiency ratings of families and telling spouses that they are not obligated to do all this free work.

And what if the foreign service wives took that literally and simply decided to do no entertaining,

no charitable work abroad? "I can't imagine an ambassador's wife having the prime minister and his wife to dinner and saying I'm sorry I have this novel to finish, I'll be in the bedroom, and not do anything in preparation," Elizabeth Thurston told the subcommittee.

The problems of the foreign service wives are different and perhaps more complicated than those of American wives living in the United States, and certainly Congress and the State Department—if it expects a Foreign Service Corps made up of families—is going to have to find ways of eliminating restrictions on jobs for spouses abroad.

No one seems to know the number of divorces in the foreign service now or how many spouses are refusing to go abroad and opting, instead, to stay with their jobs at home. Members of the panel said both trends are on the increase.

And they made it clear there is another trend in the foreign service, one that foreign service wives share with women back home. Both are emerging from a tradition in which they were expected to entertain their husband's business associates at home, donating to the company countless hours of cleaning up the house, cooking dinners, clearing and washing dishes. Housewives everywhere are now realizing that no monetary value has been attached to that work and that it provides them no economic security.

Women in the foreign service as well as at home are realizing that they have to take care of themselves financially, and they know that to do that they have to have jobs. Maybe they'll have the time and inclination to push canapes when they get home from work, and maybe not.

And the foreign service can start paying for what it's been getting for free all these years, and can provide adequate expense accounts so foreign service officers can take their business associates out to lunch or have their dinners catered.

As Patricia Ryan put it: "The United States government is not a charitable institution."